

I Peter 3:8 - Proclamation in all of Life pt 1 - Proclaiming by love

Thursday, December 13, 2012
9:29 AM

To Read:

1. Philippians 2
2. Romans 12

I. Introduction

A. Where are we in I Peter?

1. As we've gone through I Peter, so far we've done two major sections
 - i. The first major section was I Peter 1:1-2:12 which we called the Fundamentals of Salvation
 - a) We considered the blessings of salvation and the temporariness of suffering and decided that salvation was much more significant than suffering
 - b) We then looked at what it means to set our hope on Christ and how to set our hope
 - c) We closed the first section by looking at a Precious Stone and a Chosen People and determined what the purpose of salvation is - to proclaim the excellencies of Christ
 - ii. The second major section is I Peter 2:13-3:17 and in it we have been looking at how we proclaim the excellencies of Christ
 - a) We looked at submitting to worldly authorities and saw how our joyful submission is a testimony to the excellencies of Christ
 - b) We looked at wives submitting to husbands and husbands honoring their wives and saw how right relationships between husbands and wives are a testimony to the excellencies of Christ
 - c) This week we are going to look at the third heading under this major section and here Peter talks generally to every Christian in how they ought to live their lives to proclaim the excellencies of Christ
 - d) The passage closes this major section and starts out with, "Finally, all of you..."
 - i) Since Peter is only halfway done with his letter, he can't mean that this is the end of the letter
 - ii) Instead, this section ends his very practical section on how to live life during persecution to proclaim the excellencies of Christ

B. Read I Peter 1:8-17

C. How are we going to split up this passage?

1. Initially, I had planned that this section would be one message
 - i. There is a single overarching idea uniting this passage together
 - ii. This is how we ought to live all of life to proclaim the excellencies of Christ
2. But, for several reason, we are actually going to split this section into three parts and look at it over the next three weeks
 - i. First, although there is one major idea, Peter has three different focuses here in this final statement
 - a) The first we could term internal commands, we see this in verse 8
 - b) The second we could term external commands, we see this in verses 9-11
 - c) The third we could term giving an answer, we see this in verses 12-17
 - ii. Second, there is no way I could have adequately covered this passage in one week, so it had to be split up somehow
 - iii. Third, looking at the schedule, it worked out better for me to preach for the next three weeks
3. So, we are going to split the passage into three parts
 - i. First, we will look at the internal commands, verse 8, today
 - ii. Second, we will look at the external commands and the biblical principle, verses 9-11, on the 30th
 - iii. Third, we will look at giving an answer, verses 12-17, on the 6th of January

D. Proposition and Outline

1. Proposition - How we act toward each other in the church proclaims the excellencies of Christ and prepares us to proclaim the excellencies of Christ
2. Outline
 - i. How do we proclaim Christ's excellencies in the church?
 - ii. What do these commands mean?
 - iii. How do these commands proclaim the excellencies of Christ?

II. How do we proclaim Christ's excellencies in the church? (vs. 8)

A. The first thing we see here are five commands that I have termed internal commands

1. In chapter 3 verse 8, Peter turns our attention to how we ought to treat each other within the church of Christ
2. Peter has already briefly discussed this in 1:22-2:1 - but this section focused more on how we set our hope on Christ through brotherly love and also focuses on negative commands
 - i. Love one another earnestly from a pure heart
 - ii. Put away all malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander
3. In this section we are focusing on how we proclaim the excellencies of Christ through brotherly love and on positive commands
 - i. Have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart and a humble mind
4. To use some Pauline terms:
 - i. In I Peter 1:22-2:1, Peter tells us we must put off the old man in order to love rightly
 - ii. In I Peter 3:8, Peter tells us how to put on the new man, what does the love of the new man look like

III. What do these commands mean?

- I want to take some time this morning thinking about exactly what these commands mean
 - It's easy to read past these and agree generally but not think deeply about what these words mean
 - They kind of seem to all mean about the same thing, but I think if we pause we'll be able to glean much more out of these commands
- Lot's of overlap, but each is important as an emphasis
 - i. Each of the words Peter uses is only found here in this verse (nowhere else in the New Testament), but we will look at four parallel passages that should help us understand these words
 - ii. Romans 12:9-16 - *Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.*
 - iii. Ephesians 4:1-6, 32 - *I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit---just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call--- one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all...Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*
 - iv. Philippians 2:1-11 - *So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*
 - v. Colossians 3:12-17 - *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

a. Unity of mind/harmonious/one mind (ESV/NASB/KJV)

- i. Cross references:
 - 1) Romans 12:16 - *Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.*
 - 2) Ephesians 4:3 - *eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*
 - 3) Philippians 2:2 - *complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.*
 - 4) Colossians 3:15 - *And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.*
- ii. We should not be given to disagreement, but should strive to be at peace and to agree with one another as much as possible
 - 1) Live in harmony
 - 2) Be eager to maintain unity
 - 3) Be of the same mind, of one mind
 - 4) Let peace rule in your hearts
- iii. So what does this have to say about doctrinal (what we believe) or practical (how we live it out) disagreements in the church?
 - 1) First, it means that we must desire agreement and peace over doctrinal disagreements
 - a) I don't mean we shouldn't stand on the Word of God and uphold truth
 - b) But, it is easy for a proud, combative, argumentative attitude to creep into disagreements
 - c) If we are forced into a disagreement, we ought to desire for agreement and peace, not arguing
 - d) So, first, we need to look at our desires and motivations
 - 2) Second, it means that we must be ready to look at our own positions when there is a doctrinal or practical disagreement
 - a) Romans says this explicitly - we should not be wise in our own eyes
 - b) I gave a message on this not too long ago, so I won't belabor the point
 - c) But, if there is a disagreement, we must be quick to examine our own positions to determine if we are the one who is wrong
 - d) So, second, we need to look at our positions
 - 3) Third, it means that we must be careful to decide when something is worth disagreeing about
 - a) Not all truths are equally important
 - b) A disagreement about the deity of Christ is much more significant than a disagreement about eschatology
 - c) Some disagreements we can lay aside because we desire unity
 - d) So, third, we need to look at the importance of the issue
- iv. This requires especially humility (which will be our 5th point) and love for each other (which will be our 3rd point)
 - 1) Like I said, there will be a lot of overlap, but each point has a distinct emphasis
 - 2) The distinct emphasis here is being in agreement, not being argumentative
- v. Why would we do this?
 - 1) We do this because we share in the same Spirit (Ephesians)
 - 2) We do this because we share in the same Christ (Philippians)
 - a) I Corinthians 2:16 - *"For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.*
 - 3) We do this because we are really one body together in Christ (Colossians)
 - 4) We do this because we are not better than one another, we are all sinners saved by grace (Romans)

b. Sympathy/sympathetic/compassion toward one another

- i. Cross references:
 - 1) Hebrews 4:15 - *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.*
 - 2) Hebrews 10:34 - *For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.*
 - 3) Romans 12:15 - *Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.*
 - 4) I Corinthians 12:26 - *But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.*
- ii. Sympathy literally means to feel what someone else is feeling
 - 1) In Hebrews 4, Christ is able to feel our weaknesses
 - 2) In Hebrews 10, the Christians felt the sadness of those in prison
 - 3) In Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12, we are commanded to feel what each other are feeling
- iii. But, not only does it mean we feel what each other are feeling, we do so for the purpose of encouraging each other
 - 1) We are encouraged because Christ can feel our weaknesses
 - 2) The people in prison were encouraged because the other Christians felt their sadness
 - 3) We rejoice, weep, suffer and are honored together to encourage each other in all of life's circumstances
- iv. We ought to be so integrated into each other's lives that we are affected by each other's joys and grief
 - 1) If someone loses a job or a child or whatever we might lose, all of us ought to feel grief
 - 2) If someone is honored or blessed in some way, all of us ought to have joy over that (and specifically, not jealousy)
 - 3) If someone is struggling with sin, then we all ought to struggle with them
 - 4) If someone is wrestling with a decision they need to make, we all ought to wrestle with them
 - 5) Whatever is going on in each other's lives, we ought to be able to sympathize with them and encourage them
- v. Why do we do this?
 - 1) Because Christ does this (Hebrews 4)
 - a) Christ sympathizes with us although He does not have to
 - b) He feels our weaknesses and our pains so we can feel for each other too
 - 2) Because we are all members of one body (I Corinthians)
 - a) If your foot is hurt, you are hurt
 - b) In the same way, if one of your brothers or sisters is hurting, you ought to be hurting, it is the nature of the body

c. Brotherly love/brotherly/love as brethren

- i. Cross references:
 - 1) Romans 12:9-10 - *Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.*
 - 2) Ephesians 4:2 - *with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love*
- ii. Brotherly love means that we care about each other, we desire the best for each other
 - 1) We consider how our words and actions can build each other up in Christ
 - 2) We guard ourselves against words or actions that could hurt others
- iii. It is closely related to 'outdoing one another in showing honor' in Romans 12
 - 1) It means we look out for each other before we look out for ourselves
 - 2) It means we think better of our brothers and sisters than we expect them to think of us
 - 3) It means we want others to think well of our brothers and sisters in Christ
- iv. In a lot of ways, this is the overarching aspect of this verse
 - 1) Brotherly love encompasses all of the other commands of this verse and wraps them all together
 - a) Pyramid/chiasm - mindsets, feelings, love
 - b) Colossians 3:14 - *And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.*
 - 2) Why do we do all the commands of this verse? Because we love each other and want the best for each other.

d. A tender heart/kindhearted/pitiful

i. Cross references:

- 1) Ephesians 4:32 - *Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*
- 2) Colossians 3:12-13 - *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive*
- 3) Matthew 18:23-35 - *"Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.' So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."*
- 4) Matthew 9:35-36 - *And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.*
- 5) Matthew 14:13-14 - *Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.*
- 6) Mark 1:40-42 - *And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, "If you will, you can make me clean." Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, "I will; be clean." And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean.*
- 7) Luke 10:33-35 - *But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.'*

ii. Tenderhearted means that we are quick to show grace to someone because we see their pitiful condition

- 1) It includes a sensitivity to others' conditions - similar to sympathy
- 2) But it also moves beyond that in being fast to have mercy and show grace to them because of their situation
 - a) It deals primarily in situations where we have been wronged in some way by someone, even in those situations we can have sympathy (look at their condition) and show grace
- 3) Christ is our ultimate example of tenderheartedness, showing unmerited grace to those He pitied
- 4) In our case tenderheartedness also involves recognizing that we are no better off than that person is - we forgive because we have been forgiven

e. A humble mind/humble in spirit/courteous

i. Cross references:

- 1) Romans 12:16 - *Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.*
- 2) Ephesians 4:2 - *with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,*
- 3) Philippians 2:3-8 - *Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*
- 4) Colossians 3:12 - *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved,...humility, meekness, and patience,*

ii. To have a humble mind means we don't make much of ourselves

- 1) We don't make much of our thoughts or ideas - we consider others' thoughts
- 2) We don't make much of our desires - we give way to others' desires
- 3) We don't make much of our rights - we sacrifice to others' good
- 4) We don't make much of our status or position - we lower ourselves for others' honor
- 5) We don't think much of ourselves - we think well of others

iii. Why do we do this?

- 1) Because Christ did it
 - a) Philippians 2:5-8 - *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*
- 2) Christ didn't make much of His desires, His rights, His status, His position
- 3) Instead, He sacrificed all of those things for our good
- 4) If the God of the universe can sacrifice Himself in that way, can we not sacrifice ourselves in much smaller ways for the good of those He sacrificed for?

IV. How do these commands proclaim the excellencies of Christ?

1. How we act toward one another in the body of Christ is a proclamation of the excellencies of Christ to the outsider
 - i. John 13:34-35 - *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*
 - ii. Our actions toward each other are a proclamation of the excellencies of Christ to the outside world
 - iii. When they see us loving each other, that is an amazing testimony of who Christ is and what He has done for and to us
2. How we act toward one another in the body of Christ is also a proclamation of the excellencies of Christ to each other
 - i. As we go through this section on proclaiming the excellencies of Christ to the persecutor, we may be tempted to think that proclamation is primarily something directed to those outside of the church
 - ii. But, as we think here for a minute, I want to point out that we ought to be proclaiming the excellencies of Christ to each other as well
 - iii. So, in the same way that our love for each other proclaims the excellencies of Christ to the outsider, our love to each other proclaims the excellencies of Christ to each other
 - iv. We taste more of the goodness of Christ when we love and receive love from each other
3. During persecution, how we act toward each other will also prepare us to continue proclaiming the excellencies of Christ
 - i. We discussed this briefly back in I Peter 1 - when we face persecution, we need to be strengthened by our brothers and sisters in Christ
 - a. We need them to show us unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart and a humble mind
 - ii. When we are strengthened by our brothers and sisters in this way, it will enable us to go back into the world and face the persecutor again with a good testimony
 - a. We will be strengthened to submit to unjust governments
 - b. We will be strengthened to submit to cruel masters
 - c. Wives will be strengthened to submit to unbelieving husbands
 - d. Husbands will be strengthened to honor their wives
 - iii. So, not only are our actions toward each other a direct testimony to the world and to each other, they also prepare us for further proclamation of the excellencies of Christ

V. Conclusion

1. Peter gives us five attitudes to foster toward each other
 - i. We should strive for unity of mind - not being given to disagreement but working to agree with each other
 - ii. We should have sympathy for each other - we should be so involved in each others' lives that we feel each others' joy and grief
 - iii. We should have brotherly love for each other - we should desire to look out for and honor each other before ourselves
 - iv. We should show tenderheartedness toward each other - when we are wronged, we should have sympathy for the one who wronged us and be fast to show grace
 - v. We should have a humble mind toward each other - we should not make much of ourselves but should make much of others

2. In doing these five things we will proclaim the excellencies of Christ to each other and the outside world and we will prepare ourselves for further proclamation of the excellencies of Christ
 - i. Christ's excellencies are proclaimed when the outside world sees how we act toward each other
 - ii. Christ's excellencies are proclaimed inside the church when we experience the love of Christ from each other
 - iii. We are prepared to proclaim the excellencies of Christ by our brothers and sisters strengthening us in these ways

3. So, lets go out this week and think about how we can show these qualities to each other
 - i. How can we strive for unity of mind with each other this week?
 - ii. How can we show sympathy for each other this week?
 - iii. How can we show brotherly love to each other this week?
 - iv. How can we show tenderheartedness to each other this week?
 - v. How can we have a humble mind toward each other this week?